



2 November 1959

2nd Draft

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Berlin Situation

1. The Board discussed the Berlin situation this morning, and came to the following conclusions. Admittedly these are somewhat tentative -- not all the available evidence supports them. Nevertheless, on balance the Board believes:

a. that the Soviets, having over the last year pressed their attempt to force the West out of Berlin as far as they thought possible within the limits of risk they were willing to assume, are now prepared to set aside this aim for some time;

b. that Khrushchev feels that even though he has failed to get the West out of Berlin, he has achieved various secondary aims -- namely, to elevate his own and Soviet prestige by the exchange of visits with the President, to loosen up the diplomatic situation and advance prospects for a summit conference, and to improve the international standing of East Germany;

c. that during coming negotiations the USSR will prefer to focus on disarmament and other more generalized topics related to the reduction of tensions, leaving Berlin in the background.

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At present, it appears that Britain and the US, by continuing to regard Berlin as a live issue, are making the Soviet retreat from their extreme position on Berlin more difficult than necessary.

d. that, if the Western Powers go into a Summit meeting still insisting that there is a crisis over Berlin which needs to be negotiated, the Soviets will, though without applying pressure or raising tensions, give the subject another whirl to see how much give there may be in the Western position.

2. The Board believes that a quiescent phase of Soviet policy on Berlin would probably be only temporary, though it might last for some time if negotiations on other issues went well from the Soviet point of view. Khrushchev probably does want a relaxation of tensions for at least a year or two. Thus an outcome of the negotiations which had the effect of further improving the international status of the GDR and stabilizing the situation in Eastern Europe would probably make him disposed to tolerate the "abnormal" situation in Berlin for the time being. The Soviets are almost certainly confident that their bargaining position will improve as time goes on. At some date as yet undetermined by them, they will expect to resume the attempt to get the West out of Berlin, with better prospects of success and perhaps with less risk than at present.

ABBOT SMITH

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

For what it is worth, this is the draft memo I spoke of Wednesday. The Board almost believes it, but was not quite confident enough to send it to you formally.



Abbot Smith

5 November 59
(DATE)

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1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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